**2011 – 2012 American Studies I Honors History Class Expectations**

Here are the expectations for Mr. Boyle's CP American Studies I history classes for the 2011-2012 school year. This course is being run in conjunction with the English/Language Arts department, and, as such, material examined in one class will be discussed in the other. This course will also be the first of a two year thematic look at all areas of life in the United States. The themes for the sophomore year are Revolution, Commitment to Cause, Social Justice, and Frontiers. Each theme will be examined over the course of a marking period. Inside each theme, the people of the United States will be looked at in every way, including their geographies, histories, cultures, political choices, military campaigns and social convictions. We will constantly include literature in our discussions. This literature may or may not have been written during the time period and may or may not be American, but will be related in some way to the theme that we are studying. All students will be expected to do all of the work necessary for both classes in order to make positive contributions to the course.

**What to Bring to Class Every Day/Class Participation**

* Everyday students will come to class prepared to do their **best work**. They will be expected to come to class with their textbooks and notebooks (preferably a 1-inch three-ring binder), as well as pens and/or pencils and whatever else may be needed for class on a particular day. Because students will be placed in groups with other students to help the learning process, they will be expected to prepare completely each class.
* We will use a layered curriculum process in this class. What this means is that at the beginning of each unit, students will be given a sheet with a list of potential assignments, each worth a certain number of points. The first level, the “C Level,” contains a series of assignments meant to build on and expand the material that is delivered in class. The second level, the “B Level,” contains a series of assignments meant to allow the student to go beyond the basic curriculum and express their understanding of it, sometimes using outside resources. The third level, the “A Level,” asks the student to relate our current unit of study to something happening in the United States today. In order to move from one level to the next, a minimum number of points must be earned. For example, in order to move from the “C Level” to the “B Level” in a given unit, a student must first earn 70 points (note: this is just a hypothetical case and may not be the number of points necessary for each unit). The process would continue for student to move from the “B Level” to the “A Level.” The student will know at the time of distribution of the assignment sheet how many points will be needed to move from one level to the next. The student does not need to complete all of the assignments in a certain level in order to move, just accumulate enough points to move on. Many of the assignments are varied and offer the student a variety of ways to earn the points. Points gained through the layered curriculum process will be worth **50%** of the quarter grade and will be determined this way:
  + - 0 = 0
    - F- = 50
    - F = 55
    - D = 65
    - C- = 72
    - C = 75
    - C+ = 78
    - B- = 82
    - B = 87
    - A = 95
  + The layered curriculum process WILL NOT take the place of many of the traditional classroom learning opportunities, including lecture, small group work, class discussion, etc. It will also not take the place of projects, which will be described in further detail below, nor take the place of homework, also described further below.
* Projects will be essential to helping the student’s understanding of the topic being studied. These projects will be varied in scope and presentation. They will all include some form of written and oral expression, and may include some kind of visual to be created. These projects may be assigned as individuals, pairs, or small groups (4 or 5 students). If Internet access is necessary for these, computer lab time at school will be scheduled. Projects will make up 15% of the quarter grade.
* All tests will be announced at least one full week in advance of the test. Tests may take a variety of forms, including, but not limited to essay, multiple-choice, fill-ins, or a combination of these. Quizzes will be given periodically during the marking period to assess the understanding of the students in a formal way. These quizzes will be announced one day in advance, however, I do retain the right to give a “pop quiz” when appropriate. Tests and quizzes will make up 35% of the quarter grade.
* Homework will be used exclusively as a formative assessment, meaning that I will use it to check for the student’s understanding of what is being discussed. These assignments will take a number of different forms and will be used in class at some point (usually the next day) to demonstrate the student’s understanding of the topic. Because homework is going to be considered a formative assessment, it will be checked, but not graded. This check may be through some kind of self-assessment, a class discussion, a conversation with a partner about the work, random teacher questions, any combination of these, or any other option the teacher chooses to use. Every effort will be made to make sure that homework assignments are relevant and appropriate to the learning at hand. Homework assignments will be announced as such when the assignment is given.
* Daily class participation by each student is expected and required. Class participation may include, but is not limited to the following: taking notes on a teacher lecture or student presentation, actively participating in a class discussion (which includes speaking and listening), working on task on the activity that has been planned for that day (be it individually, with a partner, or with a larger group), actively watching a video by taking notes on what is being shown, or working on some history related task (i.e. timelines, outside historical reading, etc.)
  + If work for another class is being done during history class, I retain the right to take that work. The work will then be handed to the teacher whose assignment is being completed in my class.
  + While in class, students will be expected to **respect the rights of other students** to learn.
* This includes raising their hands and being recognized by the teacher, not bothering other students while the teacher is conducting a lesson, not chewing gum, and giving their complete attention (no texting, iPods {unless being used for class purposes}, cell phones, etc.) to the lesson being conducted. Failure to respect others in the classroom, including the teacher, may result in a number of consequences including, but not limited to the following: a zero for class participation for that day, after school detention with the teacher, phone calls to parents, request for a parent meeting, etc.

**Absences**

If a student is absent, he or she is responsible for finding out what was missed in class, including notes and any homework that has been assigned.  Any missing assignments, quizzes, and/or tests must be taken/turned in within two days for each day the student is absent.  For example, if a student is absent for two (2) days, the student has four (4) days to make up the work.  Failure to do so will result in zero points earned for the assignment.

When we are working on a layered curriculum unit, students should take advantage of the opportunity to work on assignments from home if they so choose.

**Extra Help**

I will be available for extra help and student make-up work as often and as long as is necessary. The best days for after school extra help and make up work will be Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students with concerns will be expected to come and see the teacher to arrange a convenient time for both of us.  It is better for the student seeking extra help to talk to the teacher as soon as he or she realizes help is needed.  The teacher also reserves the right to call any student back for extra help and make-up work when necessary.

**Teacher Contact and Other Information**

I maintain wiki page, <http://tritonamericanstudies1cp.wikispaces.com/>, for this class that is updated on a regular, if not a daily basis. I also maintain a class blog at http://mrboyleshistoryblog.blogspot.com/. There are a number of relevant links there to other blogs and other articles that I find to be appropriate to share with the students and others.

Should parents have any questions or concerns about the progress of the student, they should not hesitate to contact the teacher. The teacher may be reached best at dboyle@trsd.net, but you may leave a voicemail message for me through the school.

THE STUDENT is the most important figure in his or her own learning. I cannot simply pour information into the heads of students and expect it to be learned. Therefore, the student must take responsibility for his or her own learning. I will provide many different materials to help this learning and understanding grow, but it is worthless if the student does not take an active role in the learning. Every opportunity will be made available to help students learn, but they must and are expected to take advantage of these opportunities.

The teacher will follow the policies in the Triton Regional Senior High School Student Handbook.